United Nations

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- One year after Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Secretary-General reaffirms United Nations commitment to helping Kuwaitis repair war damages.

- Security Council receives two reports on ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

- Disarmament Commission continues work in Geneva, with special focus on the signing of strategic arms reduction agreement, preventing arms race in outer space and chemical weapons convention.

- Micronesia and Marshall Islands request United Nations membership.

- Honduras informs United Nations of border incident involving FMLN.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations to helping Kuwaitis repair war damages.

In a statement issued on the occasion of the first anniversary of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the Secretary-General said "relief that the invasion has been reversed is tempered by the awareness of the enormous tasks now confronting Kuwait and other countries of the region that were adversely affected by the crisis".

The Secretary-General said that "in the face of continuing suffering by millions of innocent people, various agencies of the United Nations family are working in conjunction with many non-governmental and humanitarian organizations to offer emergency relief and to assist in the process of reconstruction and development".

He said it was his heartfelt wish that lasting peace would be established in the region, leading to a new era of justice and harmony, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter.

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For information media—not an official record

The Security Council has received two reports dealing with the future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, as called for in its resolution 687 (1991).

One plan, from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), deals with nuclear materials, while the other, a report from the Secretary-General, which was prepared in close cooperation with the Special Commission, deals with Iraq's long-range ballistic missiles and chemical and biological weapons.

Both plans must be approved by the Council before they take effect. Both call for the continued monitoring and verification of declared and non-declared military and civilian sites, facilities and material to ensure that Iraq does not use, retain, possess, develop, construct or otherwise acquire any long-range ballistic missiles, chemical and biological weapons and nuclear-weapons-usable material. Both plans would remain in force as long as the Council decided.

The plan on long-range ballistic missiles, chemical and biological weapons would be carried out by a Compliance Unit to be organized under the Special Commission, and financing would be determined by the competent United Nations organs.

To ensure that no weapons materials are imported to Iraq, the plan calls for the development of a mechanism, before sanctions are lifted, to uphold the prohibition on the sale and supply to Iraq of any weapons or related items. The mechanism would also provide for timely information about any sale or supply to Iraq of dual-purpose items.

The 46-page plan calls on Iraq to provide to the Special Commission, within 30 days after the plan is approved by the Council, and thereafter on a regular basis, full, correct and timely information on activities, sites, facilities, material and other items, both military and civilian, that might be used for purposes prohibited in the cease-fire resolution.

The Special Commission would have the right to inspect, at any time and without hindrance, any activity, material or facility, and to carry out air surveillances over any part of Iraqi territory. In addition, the Special Commission would have the right to stop and inspect vehicles, ships, aircraft or any other means of transportation within Iraq, and to inspect imports or exports upon arrival or departure.

The plan specifies that Iraq must cooperate fully with the Special Commission in all aspects of its work, including the allowance of unrestricted freedom of entry into and exit from Iraq without delay or hindrance.

Annexed to the report are separate lists of chemicals, biological items and materials used in missile production, which require close monitoring.

The Special Commission would, through the Secretary-General, report to the Security Council every six months on the implementation of the plan, and at any other time the Council might request.

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The IAEA plan on nuclear materials, which has been described as "the most stringent in United Nations history", was handed over to the Secretary-General on 1 August by IAEA Director-General Hans Blix, for presentation to the Security Council.

Under the terms of that plan, Iraq is obliged to supply the Agency with an inventory of its nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapons-usable materials and installations, as well as equipment and non-nuclear material, and notify the Agency of any changes one month before they are made.

The Agency requires complete design information for any planned nuclear installations 180 days before construction begins. It also requires the right to full and free access at any time to all locations, all persons and all information it decides is necessary for the verification programme. In addition, the IAEA plan stipulates freedom of entry and exit to Iraq for Agency experts and United Nations personnel, supplies and equipment.

Under the plan, Iraq must declare all locations, amounts and types of weapons to the Secretary-General and the IAEA Director-General within 15 days of approval of the plan by the Security Council.

Iraq is also required to place all of its nuclear-weapons-usable materials under the exclusive control of IAEA for custody and removal, and to accept urgent on-site inspections and destruction and removal or rendering harmless of all nuclear items.

The two-part plan comes amidst ongoing inspections of Iraqi nuclear weapons sites by IAEA in an effort to destroy that country's nuclear capability.

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In Geneva, the Conference on Disarmament is continuing its general discussion, focusing on the recently concluded strategic arms reduction (START) agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, concerns about chemical weapons and proposals for preventing an arms race in outer space.

On the signing of the historic START Treaty by Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, Stephen J. Ledogar of the United States addressed the Conference, and said the ceremony represented a major achievement in securing a more stable, predictable balance at lower levels of nuclear forces.

Once ratified, he said, the Treaty which would have a duration of 15 years, would reduce each side's strategic nuclear weapons from their current level of between 10,000 and 11,000 weapons to between 8,000 and 9,000 weapons over a seven-year period. The agreement also included a major reduction in the most destabilizing weapons -- land-based ballistic missiles and their warheads -- he said, adding that the most important aspect of the Treaty was its contribution to increasing predictability and transparency.

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Serguei Batsanov of the Soviet Union said there was a growing awareness of the absurdity of an overarmed world, and the Treaty symbolized an unprecedented determination to continue to carry out reductions of nuclear arms.

Gerard Errera of France introduced a working paper on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. He recalled that his country, in its recent disarmament plan, had proposed a "code of conduct in space" which would be applicable to both civilian and military satellites. He said the experience acquired on land showed clearly that establishing confidence-building and security measures could ultimately lead towards disarmament.

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The Marshall Islands and Micronesia have applied for United Nations membership.

The applications of the two South Pacific countries, received from the Marshall Islands on 25 July, and from Micronesia on 17 July, have been transmitted to the General Assembly and Security Council by the Secretary-General for approval.

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The Honduras Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reported that an armed attack has taken place on the border between El Salvador and Honduras. Preliminary indications are that two people were killed and six injured when elements of the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) attacked Honduran soldiers.

The report said "it was disquieting that attacks are being carried out against Honduran forces at a time when the promotion of peace in Central America is the main goal of the Central American Governments".

The incident has been reported to the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) for investigation. The information was transmitted to the Secretary-General in a letter dated 30 July, from the Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations, Roberto Flores Bermudez.

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